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(12) **United States Patent**  
**Morrison**

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 6,929,837 B2**  
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Aug. 16, 2005**

- (54) **REMOVABLE LABELS FOR MOUNTING UPON OR PROXIMATE TO ELECTRICAL AND/OR OTHER INTERFACES**
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(\* ) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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(21) Appl. No.: **10/350,379**

*Primary Examiner*—Nasser Ahmad

(22) Filed: **Jan. 22, 2003**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

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**Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Provisional application No. 60/350,890, filed on Jan. 22, 2002.

(51) **Int. Cl.**<sup>7</sup> ..... **G09F 3/00**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **428/40.1**; 283/81; 428/41.3; 428/41.6; 428/41.7; 428/42.1; 428/42.2; 428/42.3

(58) **Field of Search** ..... 428/40.1, 41.7, 428/42.1, 42.2, 42.3, 41.6; 283/81

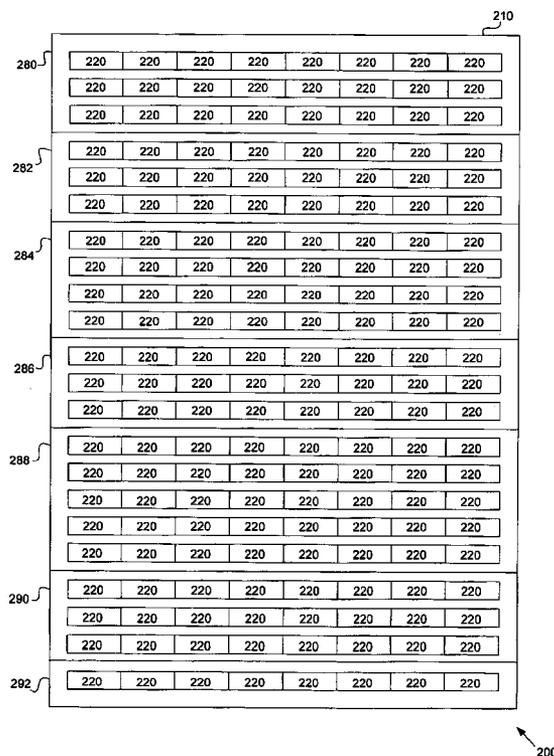
A repositionable label for mounting upon or proximate to electrical or other types of interfaces may identify devices associated with such interfaces. A label may include a static cling or other type of substrate that carries identifying information. The identifying information may exist in textual, symbolic, iconic, tactile, chromatic, and/or other formats, and may correspond to common types of electrical devices and/or appliances controlled through electrical and/or other types of interfaces. Such interfaces may include switch covers and/or switches associated therewith; fuse or circuit boxes and/or switches residing therein; outlets; power strips; and/or other interfaces typically found in households, offices, or other environments.

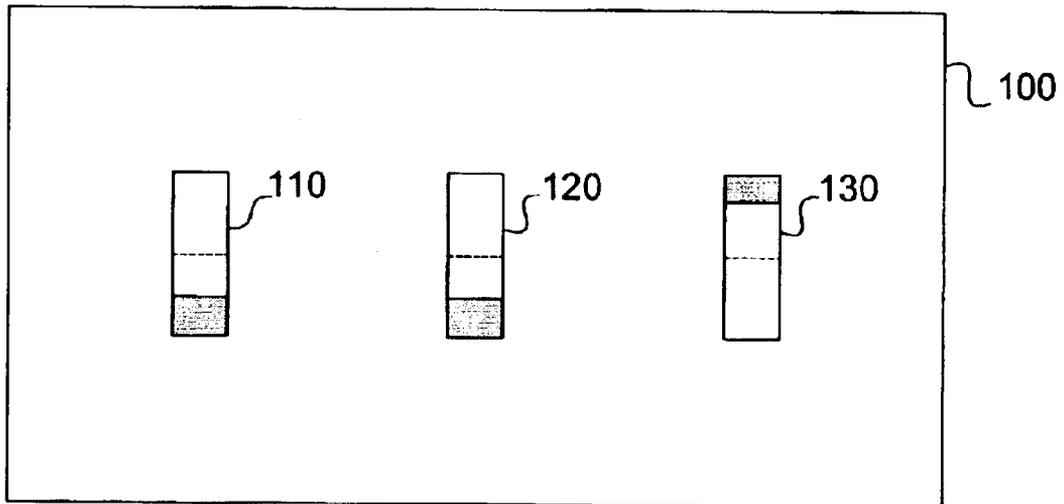
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**8 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets**





**FIG. 1 (PRIOR ART)**

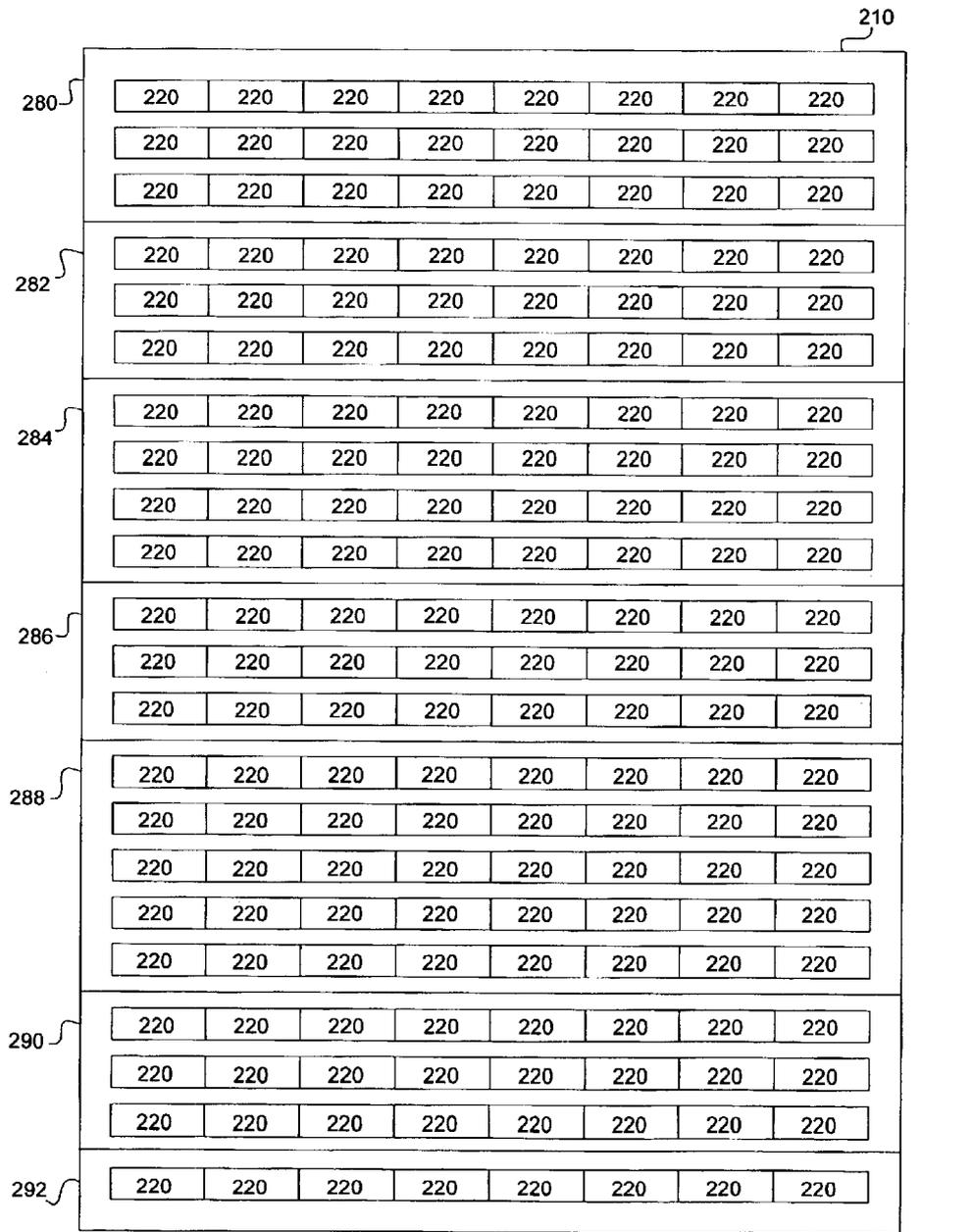


FIG. 2

200

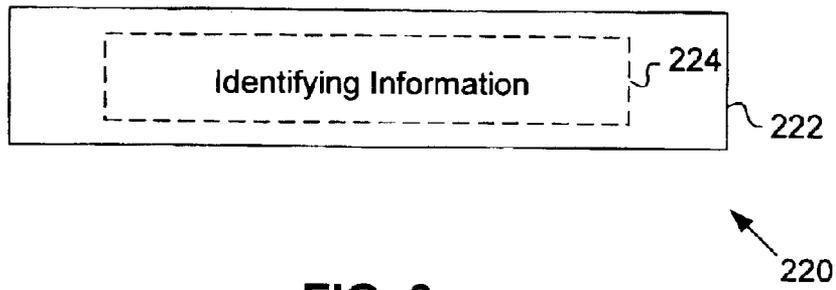


FIG. 3

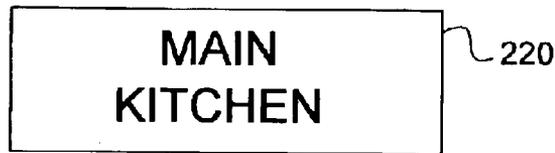


FIG. 4A

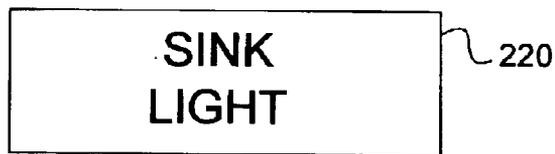


FIG. 4B

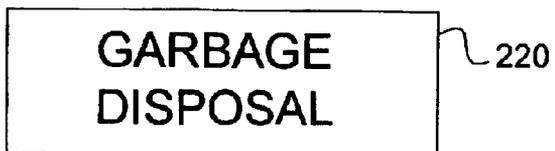
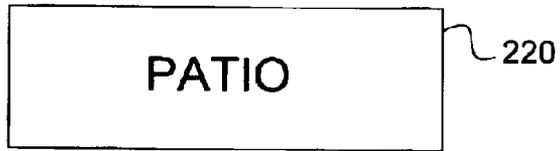


FIG. 4C



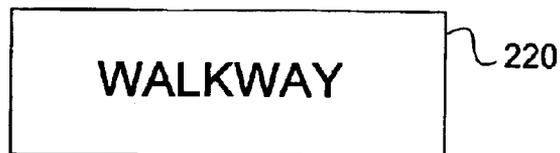
**FIG. 4D**



**FIG. 4E**



**FIG. 4F**



**FIG. 4G**



FIG. 4H

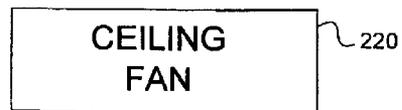


FIG. 4I



FIG. 4J

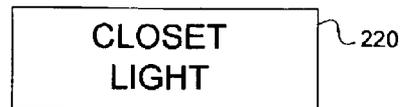


FIG. 4K



FIG. 4L



FIG. 4M

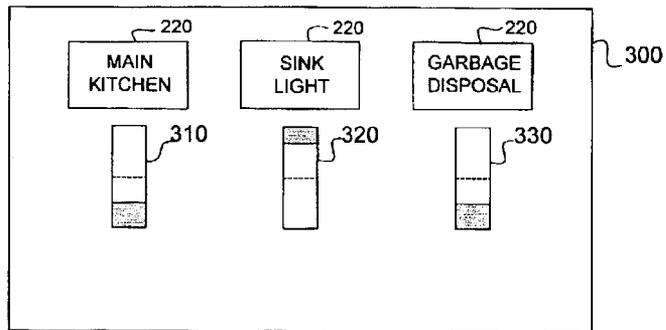


FIG. 5A

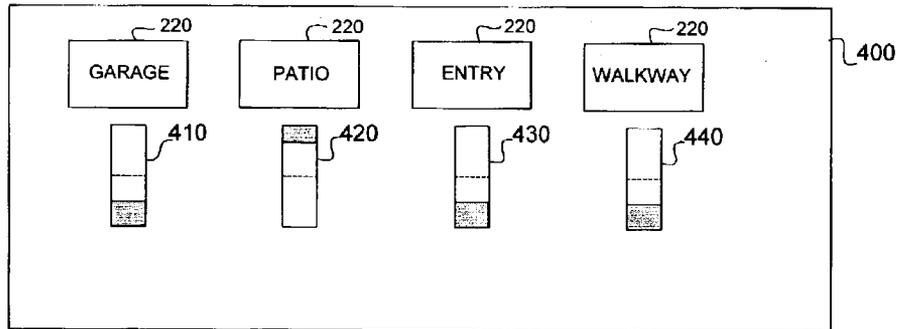


FIG. 5B

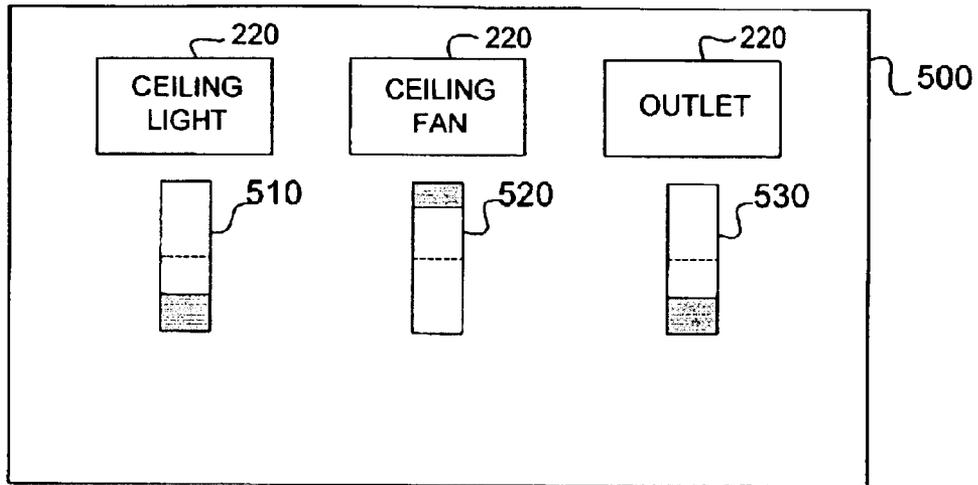


FIG. 5C

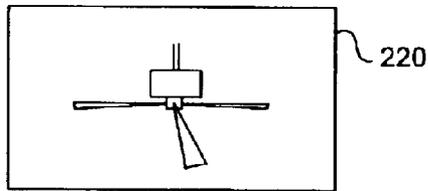


FIG. 6A

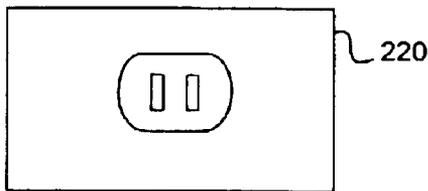


FIG. 6B

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## REMOVABLE LABELS FOR MOUNTING UPON OR PROXIMATE TO ELECTRICAL AND/OR OTHER INTERFACES

### CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This Application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/350,890, filed on Jan. 22, 2002.

### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention generally relates to labels and labeling. More particularly, the present invention comprises a set of removable labels that may be mounted upon or proximate to electrical or other interfaces for identifying common household or other devices controlled thereby.

### BACKGROUND

People occupying new, relatively new, or temporary surroundings or dwellings may be confronted with electrical switches, outlets, and/or fixtures with which they are unfamiliar. FIG. 1 is a front view of an exemplary switch plate **100** that includes a first switch **110**, a second switch **120**, and a third switch **130**. The switch plate **100** may be placed or positioned in an environment such as a kitchen. In such an environment, the first switch **100** may control a centrally-disposed light, while the second switch **120** may control an overhead light above a sink, and the third switch **130** may control a garbage disposal. A person unaccustomed to such a switch arrangement may inadvertently turn on the third switch **130**, thereby activating the garbage disposal instead of the sink light, or vice-versa. The person may repeatedly make such mistakes until they become familiar with which switch **110**, **120**, **130** controls which device. Unfortunately, familiarization may take time, which may lead to frustration. What is needed is a way to easily and/or temporarily label electrical interfaces to identify common household devices controlled thereby.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a front view of an exemplary switch plate.

FIG. 2 is a top view of a label sheet according to an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 3 is a front view of a label according to an embodiment of the invention.

FIGS. 4A through 4M are front views of labels having exemplary textual identifying information according to an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 5A is a front view of an exemplary switch plate labeled in accordance with FIGS. 4A, 4B, and 4C.

FIG. 5B is a front view of an exemplary switch plate labeled in accordance with FIGS. 4D, 4E, 4F, and 4G.

FIG. 5C is a front view of an exemplary switch plate labeled in accordance with FIGS. 4H, 4I, and 4J.

FIG. 6A is a front view of a label having an icon corresponding to a ceiling fan.

FIG. 6B is a front view of a label having an icon corresponding to an outlet.

### INVENTION DESCRIPTION

FIG. 2 is a front view of a label sheet **200** according to an embodiment of the invention. In one embodiment, the label sheet **200** comprises a release liner **210** upon which a set of removable and/or repositionable labels **220** reside. Labels **220** may reside adjacent, generally adjacent, proximate, and/or generally proximate to one another, and may or may not be separated from each other by a border. The release

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liner **210** may comprise a conventional low-friction and/or smooth material such as paper, plastic, metal, or the like. The release liner **210** may include or incorporate a low-friction coating, such as silicone, in a manner readily understood by those skilled in the art.

FIG. 3 is a front view of a label **220** according to an embodiment of the invention. In one embodiment, the label **220** comprises a removable and/or repositionable film or substrate **222**; and textual, symbolic, iconic, chromatic, tactile, and/or other identifying information **224** printed, affixed, embedded, embossed, and/or otherwise created thereupon and/or therein and/or carried by the label **220** for indicating common types of electrical devices controlled through electrical interfaces. Electrical interfaces may include, for example, switch covers; fuse or circuit boxes and/or switches therein; outlets; power strips; and/or other interfaces typically found in households, offices, or other environments.

One side of a label film or substrate **222** may serve as a contact side for application or attachment to, proximate to, or generally near an electrical interface. The attachment or binding properties of a label **220** may depend upon the properties of the materials from which the label substrate **222** is manufactured, and/or the properties of the label's identifying information **224**. A label's attachment or binding properties may arise from electrostatic interactions, and/or an appropriate amount of plasticizer or other constituent material that provides desired physical and/or chemical properties, in a manner understood by those skilled in the art. In one embodiment, a label film or substrate **222** may be formed from static cling material, such as a conventional polymeric vinyl film. Static cling materials may exhibit adhesion to smooth, generally non-porous surfaces, including bare and/or coated metals, plastics, and/or glasses. One exemplary static cling material suitable for use as a label substrate **222** according to an embodiment of the invention is Avery Graphics™ Static Cling calendared vinyl film (Avery Graphics Media North America, Santa Fe Springs, Calif., and [www.averygraphics.com](http://www.averygraphics.com)). Static cling inkjet printer sheets (available from [www.rippedsheets.com](http://www.rippedsheets.com)) may also be suitable for label substrate use.

A label film or substrate **222** may alternatively or additionally comprise an oriented-polypropylene substrate, such as ClingZ® manufactured by Permcharge Corporation of Rio Rancho, N.Mex. ([www.permcharge.com](http://www.permcharge.com)), and available through Transilwrap of Franklin Park, Ill. ([www.transilwrap.com](http://www.transilwrap.com)). Such a material includes a permanent or quasi-permanent electrostatic charge therein, and may exhibit adhesion to a wide variety of surfaces, including drywall, wood, and/or brick.

According to an embodiment of the invention, a label's identifying information **224** indicates or corresponds to a commonly encountered type of electrical or other type of device, as further detailed below. Identifying information **224** may be formed in a variety of manners. In one embodiment, identifying information **224** may be printed upon the label film **220** using conventional offset, screen, and/or digital printing processes in conjunction with appropriate types of conventional inks and/or dyes. Identifying information **224** may be applied to a label substrate **222** through inkjet or laser printing. Identifying information **224** may alternately or additionally be embossed, embedded, or otherwise formed in or upon the label film **222**.

Relative to appearance, a label's film or substrate **222** may be colored (including multicolored), partially colored, opaque, or optically clear. The label's identifying information **224** may be colored (including multicolored), partially colored, opaque, or optically clear, depending upon or in accordance with the coloring or shading of the substrate **222**.

A label substrate **222** and/or identifying information **224** may comprise pigments, powders, granules, coatings, particles, or the like to provide desired optical characteristics, such as iridescent, luminescent, and/or glow-in-the-dark capabilities.

In one embodiment, identifying information **224** comprises text. FIGS. 4A through 4M are front views of labels **220** having exemplary textual identifying information **224**. Each label **220** shown in FIGS. 4A through 4O includes a word or phrase associated with or corresponding to an electrical device or fixture commonly encountered in a home environment. In particular, identifying information **224** in FIGS. 4A through 4O comprises the words "MAIN KITCHEN," "SINK LIGHT," "GARBAGE DISPOSAL," "GARAGE," "PATIO," "ENTRY," "WALKWAY," "CEILING LIGHT," "CEILING FAN", "OUTLET," "CLOSET LIGHT," "MAIN BATHROOM," and "EXHAUST FAN" in the manners shown. Alternate or additional labels **220** may include other words and/or phrases, such as "POOL," "JACUZZI," or "LEFT FRONT BURNER." Those skilled in the art will recognize that any given textual identifying information **224** may comprise additional or fewer words in alternate embodiments, provided such words effectively convey electrical device association(s).

FIG. 5A is an exemplary switch plate **300** covering or placed over a first, a second, and a third switch **310**, **320**, **330** that are labeled in accordance with labels **220** shown in FIGS. 4A, 4B, and 4C. In particular, a label **220** mounted or placed above the first switch **310** indicates that the first switch **310** corresponds to or controls a main kitchen light. Similarly, a label **220** mounted above the second switch **320** may indicate that the second switch **320** controls a light above or near a kitchen sink, and a label **220** mounted above the third switch **330** indicates that the third switch **330** controls a garbage disposal.

FIG. 5B is an exemplary switch plate **400** that covers a first, a second, a third, and a fourth switch **410**, **420**, **430**, **440** that are labeled in accordance with labels **220** shown in FIGS. 4D, 4E, 4F, and 4G. In particular, a label **220** mounted, placed, or positioned above the first switch **410** indicates that the first switch **410** corresponds to or controls a garage light. Additionally, a label **220** above the second switch **420** indicates that the second switch **420** controls a patio light; a label **220** above the third switch **430** indicates that the third switch **430** controls a light in an entryway; and a label **220** above the fourth switch **440** indicates that the fourth switch **440** controls a light associated with a walkway.

FIG. 5C is an exemplary switch plate **500** that covers a first, a second, and a third switch **510**, **520**, **530** that are labeled in accordance with labels **220** shown in FIGS. 4H, 4I, and 4J. In particular, a label **220** mounted adjacent to the first switch **510** indicates that the first switch **510** controls a ceiling light, while a label **220** applied adjacent to the second switch **520** indicates that the second switch **520** controls a ceiling fan, and a label **220** applied adjacent to the third switch **530** indicates that the third switch **530** controls or activates an electrical outlet.

Identifying information **224** on one or more labels **220** may alternatively or additionally comprise symbols and/or icons. FIG. 6A is a front view of a label **220** that includes an icon representing a ceiling fan; and FIG. 6B is a front view of a label **220** that includes an icon representing an outlet. The labels **220** shown in FIG. 6A and/or 6B may be placed or mounted upon or near a switch cover plate in a manner analogous to that depicted in FIGS. 5A, 5B, and/or 5C. In another embodiment, one or more labels **220** may symbolically indicate a given type of control associated with an electrical appliance, for example, and on/off button, a volume control, or a given burner position upon a stove.

In other embodiments, identifying information **224** may comprise or include tactile information, such as raised or

depressed lines, ridges, dots, areas, and/or regions. For example, a label **220** may include or incorporate a set of Braille bumps corresponding to the phrase "garbage disposal." Similarly, a label **220** may include a set of Braille bumps corresponding to the phrase "Jacuzzi heater." Such Braille labels may be applied to switch cover plates in a manner analogous to that depicted in FIGS. 5A, 5B, and/or 5C. As another example, a label **220** may include a set of Braille bumps corresponding to the phrase "water heater." Such a label **220** may be applied to a circuit breaker or fuse box, or a switch within a circuit breaker or fuse box.

Labels **220** generated, produced, or manufactured in accordance with the present invention may include other textual, symbolic, iconic, tactile, and/or chromatic identifying information **224**, depending upon the type of electrical or other interface to which they are directed. For example, labels **220** directed toward circuit breaker or fuse boxes may include textual identifying information **224** specifying or corresponding to "MAIN BREAKER," "WASHER/ DRYER," "WATER HEATER," "KITCHEN LIGHTS," "DISHWASHER," "MASTER BEDROOM," "MASTER BATHROOM," "SECOND BEDROOM," "SECOND BATHROOM," and/or other identifying information **224**. As another example, labels **220** for application to power strips may include identifying information **224** such as "COMPUTER," "DESK LIGHT," "STEREO," and/or "TV," and/or generally equivalent words, phrases, and/or symbols or icons. As yet another example, a label **220** for application to outlets may include identifying information **224** such as "SWITCH CONTROLLED," or a generally equivalent word, phrase, or icon. Additionally, labels **220** generated, produced, or manufactured in accordance with the present invention may include identifying information **224** indicating or corresponding to functional status or working condition, such as "BROKEN," "FAULTY," or "INSPECTED." Such labels **220** may be applied or employed in manners analogous to those described above, in addition to or separate from other labels **220**.

Referring again to FIG. 2, any given label sheet **200** may include labels **220** organized categorically according to type. For example, a label sheet **200** may include a first section **280** in or upon which labels **220** directed toward kitchen use reside; a second section **282** in which labels **220** directed toward living room and/or family room use reside; a third section **284** in which labels **220** directed toward bedroom use reside; a fourth section **286** in which labels **220** directed toward bathroom use reside; a fifth section **288** in which labels **220** directed toward entry area and/or outdoor use reside; a sixth section **290** in which labels **220** directed toward circuit breaker or fuse box use reside; a seventh section **292** in which labels directed toward indicating functional status or working condition reside; and/or other sections. Any given section **280**, **282**, **284**, **286**, **288**, **290**, **292** may include a corresponding section heading and/or description to aid understanding. A label sheet **200** may include fewer or additional sections, and/or any given label sheet **200** may be organized differently. Moreover, a set of label sheets **200** produced in accordance with the present invention may be arranged in a folder or binder to form one or more portions of move-in materials that may be useful to home builders, real estate agents, leasing agents, new tenants, and/or others.

The present invention may additionally comprise a system for producing, generating, or printing removable and/or repositionable labels **220** for identifying electrical controls, fixtures, and the like. In one embodiment, such a system includes a personal computer having an inkjet printer coupled thereto. The personal computer may include a processing unit; a data storage unit; a keyboard, a mouse, and an input/output unit; a display device; a network interface unit; and a memory, in a manner readily understood by

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those skilled in the art. Within the memory, an operating system may manage access to various system hardware and/or software resources. Additionally, program instructions within the memory may direct the generation and/or printing of textual and/or iconic identifying information 224 upon a label substrate 222 such as a static cling inkjet printer sheet. Such program instructions may be responsive to user input, and may provide for the retrieval of common identifying information 224 from a library within a local and/or remote database; updating of such databases; and/or the printing of such identifying information 224 upon sheets of static cling material.

The preceding description is intended to enable a person skilled in the art to make and use the present invention. The general principles described herein may be applied to embodiments and applications other than those detailed above without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims. The present invention is not intended to be limited to the embodiments shown, but is to be accorded the widest scope consistent with the principles and features disclosed herein.

What is claimed is:

1. A label in combination with an electrical cover plate comprising:

- an electrical cover plate having an exterior surface;
- a repositionable label substrate comprising a static cling material adheres to the exterior surface of the electrical cover plate as well as the label is removable from the exterior surface of the electrical cover plate and the

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label is repositionable upon the exterior surface of the electrical cover plate; and

an identifier that is integrally carried by the repositionable label substrate, the identifier indicating a type of device associated with the exterior surface of the electrical cover plate, the identifier comprising a set of topographic variations conveying the identity of the device in response to touch.

2. The label of claim 1, wherein the device comprises one from the group of a switch, an outlet, and an electrical appliance.

3. The label of claim 1, wherein the repositionable substrate comprises a vinyl film.

4. The label of claim 1, wherein the repositionable substrate comprises a material carrying an electrostatic charge therein.

5. The label of claim 4, wherein the repositionable substrate comprises an oriented polypropylene substrate.

6. The label of claim 1, wherein the identifier additionally comprises at least one from the group of a textual, a symbolic, and an iconic identifier.

7. The label of claim 6, wherein the repositionable substrate comprises a material that exhibits glow in the dark properties.

8. The label of claim 6, wherein the identifier comprises a material that exhibits glow in the dark properties.

\* \* \* \* \*